

# **SIMPLE WRITING SKILLS FOR CLARITY, IMPACT AND INFLUENCE**

*While talk is ephemeral, what is written remains a permanent record. The written word represents and defines our organizations. What we write reflects how clearly we think; how forcefully, persuasively and unambiguously we transmit our message.*

Though executives appreciate the importance of good writing, many find it difficult. Often they write in a way that both mystifies the reader and muddies the message. They tend to employ expressions they would never use in speech – to overdo adjectives and adverbs – to use wordy noun phrases – to adopt the passive voice because it seems more intellectual.

None of this is necessary and most of it is counter-productive. In order for our writing to be quickly and completely understood and acted on we must make it simple.

In this informal yet intensive one-day workshop, John Harman will enable participants to acquire the simple skills of clear succinct and persuasive writing. It allows for plenty of practice: including the rewriting of piece/s of their own work.

## **Designed for**

Anyone in the organization who has to write emails, memos, reports, manuals and/or policy documents both to colleagues and to people outside the organization.

## **Pre-Requisites or Entrance Requirements**

Participants should have completed Year Twelve English or the equivalent.

## **Course Outcomes**

After completing this course, participants will be able to –

- Write more clearly, precisely and succinctly
- Write shorter and more clearly precise reports; policy documents; manuals; memos; emails
- Know how to prepare and order any piece of writing that transmits information or seeks to persuade
- Know how to edit out unnecessary words and phrases to achieve greater clarity and impact in their writing
- Know more about the nature of reading and what various readerships understand and respond to
- Know how to target their writing to specific readerships and to write to the reading age
- Know how to structure powerful and informative sentences
- Know how to revise and rewrite quickly and competently

## **Course Content**

- The three golden rules and seven major principles of clear, simple writing
- Determining the precise objective/s of any piece of writing and the most cogent order in which it should be written
- Closely identifying your readers: writing to address and appeal to differing target readerships
- Understanding the difference between writing to inform and writing to influence or persuade: how the two may be combined
- Learning to write for people outside your organization: turning jargon into common parlance
- Examining twenty-two common areas of poor writing: from grammar and vocabulary to tone, style and proof-reading
- Learning how to précis: turning very long documents into very short ones
- Making the writing muscular: finding and eradicating the hidden 15% (at least) of fat in every piece of writing – the soft, abstract noun phrases; the soggy adjectives and adverbs; the overuse of the passive

## **Duration**

Full day, though the basics may be covered in a half-day

## **Resource Requirements**

Participants are asked to bring an A4 notepad and writing implements.

Participants are also asked to bring to the course a substantial piece, or pieces (500 words) of their own writing which they will work on (privately) in a self-editing session in the afternoon.

Participants will be given a 40 page manual, incorporating the simple writing techniques covered in the course, as well as a laminated fact sheet – a memory jogger for good writing principles – which may be kept somewhere handy around their desks.

## **Delivery style**

The day allows for plenty of practice, in which course participants will engage in more than a dozen separate, interactive writing exercises designed to develop their skills and confidence, finishing with rewriting a piece or pieces of their own work. The style is open, interactive, fully participatory... and fun!

For more information contact **John Harman:**

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